



CITY OF HOUSTON

Sylvester Turner

Mayor

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May 13, 2019

Dear Members of the Texas Senate,

Houston was the first city in the country to have a mayor's office position dedicated solely to combatting human trafficking. The placement of this position directly within the mayor's office gives it more leverage to mobilize City departments and work with the community. I am thoroughly dedicated to stopping this scourge that victimizes so many, tens of thousands of them children. The Texas Attorney General's office estimates that there are 79,000 victims of youth and minor sex trafficking at any given time. I am heartened to see the State considering legislation to address treatment and prevention of sex trafficking.

House Bill 1113 by Representative Sarah Davis amends the Health and Safety Code to require the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to establish a treatment program to improve the quality and accessibility of care for victims of child sex trafficking. The bill requires HHSC to designate a health-related institution of higher education to operate the program and to collaborate with that institution and the Child Sex Trafficking Prevention Unit within the criminal justice division of the governor's office in establishing the program.

HB 1113 mandates HHSC to establish and administer a matching grant program that awards grants to provide initial money to establish municipal sex trafficking prevention programs in Texas. The bill requires the governor's office, in collaboration with the Child Sex Trafficking Prevention Unit, to establish and administer a grant program that awards grants to local law enforcement agencies to train local law enforcement officers to recognize signs of sex trafficking. The legislation also amends the Government Code to bar vendors that have taken any action that directly supports or promotes human trafficking from participating in state contracts.

I hope you will join me in combatting human trafficking by supporting HB 1113.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sylvester Turner", is written over the printed name.

Sylvester Turner

Mayor